



Louis H. Bruni
Webb County Judge

1000 Houston St. 3rd Floor
Laredo, Texas 78040

(956) 523-4600
Fax (956) 523-5065

WEBB COUNTY PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 21, 2005

CONTACT: Raul Casso

Austin Court Issues Final Judgment in Webb/City Bridge Dispute

AUSTIN – The question of whether Webb County has the legal authority to build an international bridge without permission from the City of Laredo was finally answered today by the 261st District Court of Travis County where, over three months ago, Webb County filed suit for declaratory relief in order to settle the issue.

In its brief, three page judgment, the Austin court ruled in favor of Webb County stating that the county, "...is legally authorized to construct its international bridge project without the City [of Laredo's] consent..." The Austin Court's final judgment follows an advisory opinion it issued on February 11, 2005 on the same issue.

"We are pleased that the outcome is in favor of Webb County as we anticipated," said Webb County Judge, Louis H. Bruni, "it is unfortunate, however, that this sort of disagreement should exist between the County and the City; we should be working together," said Bruni.

Austin's final judgment comes on the heels of a recent ruling by the Webb County 111th District Court invalidating the purchase by the City of 17 acres located at Webb County's proposed bridge site. Holding that the City violated the Texas Open Meetings Act, the 111th District Court ruled the transaction to be "...illegal and void." The United Independent School District, the seller of the property, has since rescinded the deal.

"We certainly wish the City would decide to get along with us because it makes more sense for all involved that we join together in this effort; after all, we're serving the same community," stated Judge Bruni, "In the meantime, however, we have to keep doing what is best for our people—and that is to provide services and to find ways to pay for them without raising taxes."

The City of Laredo intends to appeal the final ruling, and has hired the firm of Baker Botts in order to do so.